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Children at Home in Madrid

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CHILDREN AT HOME IN MADRID

In this article we focus on transformations occurring in middle/upper-class children's homes in Madrid (Spain). We examine emergent patterns of use and appropriation of domestic space in children's lives and focus on two themes: (1) the re-utilization of daily tasks and home spaces for children's leisure and socialization, (2) the role of new technologies of communication in children's lives and social relations from home. The results show children's active role in the appropriation of domestic space and suggest that discussions of children's withdrawal from public space need to be reconsidered from an ecological-systemic perspective.

Keywords: Urban Childhood – Home – New Technologies of Communication –Visual Methods

INTRODUCTION

For some time now commentators across Europe have been discussing children's withdrawal from urban public space (e.g. Cabanellas and Eslava, 2005; Livingstone, 2007). Currently, children's activities during out-of-school time tend to be restricted to specialized play areas, is increasingly spent in institutional settings, in transportation to and from these settings, at home or, more recently, in virtual spaces. While this portrait is vehemently put forward in policy documents (at least in Spain) it also is true that it can be hedged in a number of ways. To begin, there are socio-economic and cultural differences tied to both the amount of time children spend in public spaces and the type and quality of the spaces that are available to children during their out-of-school time (Lareau, 2000; Karsten, 2005). Also, the claim in relation to withdrawal from public space can also be refined since, at least for Spain, a number of studies still show how numerous children routinely enjoy urban public space (Baylina et al; 2006; Poveda et al; 2007).

However, this transformation is more broadly inserted in a larger re-conceptualization of how contemporary Western urban children's spatio-temporal experiences are structured. The suggestion is that children's lives are characterized by increased spatial fragmentation and specialization: children's routines are composed of a succession of activities, roles and social relations which are relatively disconnected from each other. This is described as an insularization of children's spaces (Zehier, 2001; Gillis, 2008), in which contemporary children's lives consist of individually structured sets of transitions from one 'spatial island' to another, rather than the expanding appropriation of an interrelated urban surrounding shared by many children. The 'islanding' notion has a number of strengths. It is historically grounded and captures social, urban and policy transformations that have taken place during the second half of the twentieth century. Also, it accounts well for the rationale behind the

specialization of children's spaces, which include the professional and expert discourses that favor this process or the parenting and residential patterns among middle-class families that lead to children's experiential 'islanding' (Zehier, 2001).

Yet, this formulation raises at least two problems. First, the notion of islanding explains the individual creation (e.g. commercial play centers), disappearance (e.g. the street as play space) or transformation (e.g. homes) of spaces for children but fails to look at these from a systemic-ecological perspective: as an interrelated set of environments where transformations in one space impact on other spaces and are made meaningful precisely through these interrelations. To continue with the proposed metaphor, it fails to understand these islands as part of an archipelago, as an interrelated system of islands that form a larger unit. In other words, stress is often put on what is lost with the attrition of certain environments more than in understanding transformations in children's spaces in relation to each other or the full set of affordances that are made available in the total archipelago of children's lives. Second, the islanding metaphor highlights discontinuity between children's spaces which, from a historical perspective, is opposed to previous forms of continuity in children's experiences. Yet, it could be that new forms of continuity, grounded on other means and strategies but which serve similar connective functions, are developing. In particular, the notion of islanding does not contemplate the role that children's and adolescent's engagement with new technologies of communication can play in connecting different social spheres (Holloway and Valentine, 2001).

An analysis that moves in a direction that circumvents some of these limitations is Karsten's (2005) study of changes in use of urban space across different generations of children in Amsterdam. Her analysis incorporates a historical perspective, documents a diversity of trajectories in the

use of urban space, acknowledges the role of cultural and socio-economic differences in these divergent patterns and examines the social and political consequences of these transformations from a holistic perspective. In fact, based on the description of the different childhoods that are identified in her study, only one pattern would easily fit with the islanding trend. This would be what Karsten (2005) describes as the 'backseat generation', which co-exists with other forms of children's use of space ('outdoor children' and 'indoor children'), suggesting that the overall picture is much more complex than simply stressing fragmentation and withdrawal from public space. In this paper we continue this more nuanced look at children's experiences by re-examining different strands of data on children's routines in the city of Madrid (Spain). We center our attention on contemporary uses of the family home in primarily middle-class and upper-class children and do so from an ecological-systemic perspective (e.g. Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994) where children's activity in this particular space is understood within children's overall routines, space-time behaviors and broader social transformations in children's experiences. In this context we examine two issues: (a) children's daily routines at home and children's appropriation of home spaces for play and socialization; (b) the role of new technologies of communication in mediating children's social relations and spaces.

There are several arguments in support of the relevance of this analysis to broader debates about urban children's daily lives. First, it contributes to the growing examination of children's intimate geographies (Hancock and Gillen, 2007) by presenting data from a geographical and national context where these issues remain under-examined. Second, we present findings from a cohort of children that, while relatively homogeneous in terms of cultural and socio-economic background, is diverse in terms of the overall routines and space-time behavior patterns they engage in (Marín, 2009; Poveda et al; 2007). Consequently, we will be able to examine

children's appropriation of home space in the context of various forms of engagement with out-of-home space. Third, the studies we present show a type of engagement with the city of middle-class and upper-class Madrid children and families in which the neighborhood and immediate community continues to be a relevant structuring element. Finally, part of the data we draw from is particularly equipped to examine the role of new technologies of communication in the structuration of children's socio-spatial experiences.

METHODOLOGY

The findings in this paper draw from a series of interrelated studies on children's daily lives in Madrid. These studies followed similar methodological procedures and research rationale but were part of different projects. Here we will present the common methods used in all studies and then contextualize in more detail the social setting and sample of each study. The goal of the two studies was to document children's and pre-adolescents' after-school daily routines. To do this all participants followed similar procedures based on a variation of the photo elicitation interview (Rasmussen, 2004; Epstein, Stevens, McKeever and Baruchel, 2006) First, participants were asked to take photographs of children's daily lives during a full week. In the first study, families and children were not given specific instructions in relation to the number of photographs that needed to be taken (and most participants took between 20-30 photographs) and in the second study pre-adolescent participants were asked to take a minimum of five pictures a day (thus produced samples of over 35 photographs in all cases). In this second study, after collecting this general set of photographs, the pre-adolescents were asked to take a second series of photographs focusing on their use of technologies during a week. All participants were later interviewed using the photographs that they took as an occasion to explore their daily experiences and the scenes captures in photographs. Participants in the first study were interviewed once and participants in the

second study were interviewed twice over a course of several months.

The collection of photographs and the interviews with the children were followed by interviews with their parents where we explored beliefs in relation to housing, education and many other family-life decisions. All these interviews took place in children's homes and many of the transactions in relation to cameras, photographs, information, etc. were made through visits to participants' homes – thus visual and interview data is complemented with a few casual direct observations of children's homes.

The treatment of visual data and research findings from these studies followed the ethical and legal guidelines of social research and use of personal data in Spain. All children and parents participated voluntarily in the study and all parents/legal guardians gave written consent for their children and have their visual data used for research purposes. The consent form we prepared included an additional permission to use the photographs in scientific publications and other forms of academic communication. All the examples we present in this paper have been drawn from participants who granted this extended use. Further, in all cases we use pseudonyms to refer to participants, omit identifying information and digitally process the images to mask children's identities.

Participants I: 'Retiro Children'

Participants in the first study were recruited in the fall of 2005 in a library, a bookstore and a city park as part of a study focused on literacy learning in non-school or family contexts. 32 children (from 24 families) participated in this study. Ages ranged between 1-9 years of age (mean 4-5 years of age) and the sample was relatively gender balanced (18 boys and 14 girls). The three sites were located in Retiro district of the city of Madrid and the majority of participants resided in this district. Retiro is primarily a middle-class residential district

within the central Madrid area that has grown around Retiro park, the emblematic and historical recreational park of the city. Additionally, older parts of Retiro district have been the target of major urban regeneration and residential development over the last two decades and, as a result, the district has one of the highest proportions of urban green spaces, public recreational areas and public infrastructures per inhabitant in the city of Madrid. The sample of families that participated in this study was moderately representative of the Retiro district population and was composed of mostly college educated parents, with Spanish-origin backgrounds, who enrolled their children in the district's public or chartered schools – for further details of the sample and research context see Poveda et al (2007).

Participants II: 'Chamartín/Salamanca Pre-Adolescents'

The participants in the second study were four pre-adolescents between 9-13 years of age when the study began (3 female and 1 male) who belonged to three nuclear families (two girls were sisters) and were all part of the same extended family. These participants were recruited in 2009 through a network of personal contacts as part of a collection of case studies focused on pre-adolescents' daily routines and their use of communication technologies. The three families that participated in the study lived in the affluent sectors of Chamartín and Salamanca districts. Salamanca is a central-northern district of the city of Madrid historically considered the 'noble' area of the city and Chamartín is a newer district of the city that has grown north of Salamanca and also has a higher than average household income rate for the city of Madrid (although it is more internally heterogeneous than Salamanca district). The families participating in this study fall within an upper-class income and occupational bracket and see themselves as belonging to a historically 'well-bred' Madrid family. All the participating pre-adolescents attend a private international school located in the district and

were the third generation in the family to do so.

A Note on the Integration of the 'Retiro' and 'Salamanca/Chamartín' Studies

In this paper we are going to integrate findings from these two studies to develop a broader argument in relation to how domestic space is appropriated by certain children in Madrid. We believe that, with the proper precautions (to which we return to in the final discussion), this integration is possible for various reasons. First, there is a methodological and theoretical continuity between studies that makes their findings relevant to each other. Second, despite the spectrum of socio-economic differences between participants there are certain similarities in the geographical areas of Madrid covered in these studies. Retiro, Chamartín and Salamanca currently represent comparatively well equipped districts, in terms of green areas, infrastructures, residential opportunities, etc; of the central nucleus of Madrid - i.e. what in Madrid is considered 'inside the perimeter' of the M-30 orbital highway. Finally, while there are significant age differences between participants in the two studies which we do not examine here, at the very least our sequential discussion of the data may be tentatively read as a cross-sectional portrait of age-related transformations.

CHILDREN AT HOME IN MADRID MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES

The above description of Retiro district suggests it is perceived as a desirable area of the city to live in and raise families. This representation of the district is confirmed in parents' discourses. While some families mentioned proximity to other family members (primarily children's grandparents) or work as a determining factor, many parents highlighted how Retiro is a centrally located area of the city which offers many advantages and hosts a population that is socially 'in the middle range' (all interviews were conducted in Spanish):

Extract 1: Interview with parent of a 2 year old girl

(...) F: There are parks where children can play, there's a bakery there, there's a market there, day to day things, the surrounding area makes day to day life easier, and then the feeling is that it was a varied neighborhood, it was a neighborhood where there could be a bit of everything (...) you had here a little bit of everything, you had 'grand-pas' and retired people doing their errands, people with notebooks who are students, couples, people with children (...) I don't like at all apartment complex communities where the concern is to put surveillance cameras, more fences and enclosed areas (...) I don't care at all about all those worries; on the other hand I also dislike the banana peel in the elevator (...)

M: so this, is not in either of two extremes, it's in the middle (...)

Thus, for the parents in our study the neighborhood environment is not considered particularly hostile and several of the facilities that make life easier for families and children are highlighted in parents' descriptions of their neighborhoods. Intertwined with this perception we find that the participating children engage in a variety of after-school routines involving different interrelationships with public and out-of-home space. Some children spend most of their evenings in extra-curricular activities, others spend their time playing in parks, the school playground or doing errands, others find a balance between these two schedules and, finally, others spend their evenings at home (Poveda et al; 2007). However, independently of these styles of after-school time-use, all the children in the sample have an active home life and produced a visual record that highlighted the relevance of their home as socialization and leisure spaces. Further, the fact that children spent more or less time at home did not seem to be

tied to parental perceptions of 'danger' or 'deterioration' of public space.

Drawing on the visual data, interviews and observations we examine two features of children's home life: (a) how daily routines and chores are appropriated as play and socialization activities and (b) how physical spaces in the home are transformed into child activity areas.

and completing a number of routines and daily chores. These tasks serve practical purposes (e.g. hygiene, feeding or house-work) but are also taken up by parents and children as opportunities for play, conversation and participation in family-life. For example, meal times such as the afternoon snack or night-time supper are used as moments for conversation or even literacy-related activities:

Daily Routines and Socialization at Home

Children's time at home, especially during school-day evenings, involves participating in

Figure 1: Book reading during snack-time



Therefore, like in other studies conducted with middle-class families in Western contexts (e.g. Fasulo, Pontecorvo, Sterponi, 2001; Ochs and Shohet, 2006), mealtimes are an important time for family socialization, although they are not the only moment to do this. Also, shared book-reading activities play a role in family life but are not limited to or even enshrined in the often discussed bedtime story routine (cf. Melzi and Caspe, 2005).

In line with this structuration of home-time, the preparation of meals can also be turned into an activity involving children. Yet, this is not done by transforming household-tasks into opportunities for teaching and learning (cf. Lancy, 2010) but by incorporating children into household chores (Rogoff, 2003), which for a number of children and families are part of their responsibilities (cf. Klein, Graesch and Izquierdo, 2009):

Figure 2: Children helping prepare dinner



Other daily practical daily activities, such as bathing, are gradually expected to be completed independently by children. In turn, these chores are also taken up by children as opportunities for play and, for, bathing areas

shared by all family members are equipped with children's toys and bathing is re-constructed as play-time/play space despite the physical constraints this might involve:

Figure 3: Bathing and play



This transformation of a facility shared by children and adults in the household into a child-focused space is part of larger process of appropriation and transformation of home spaces into child spaces. By this we mean that homes spaces traditionally allocated for adult socialization and activity or physically organized around their instrumental use are transformed by parents and children to include children, their interests and activities. As the photographs show, this transformation has a clear material dimension in which toys, child-oriented design and other child-friendly

objects become much more visible inside homes.

Children's Spaces in the Home

The homes that we have documented and observed in this project, especially in the sample of families from Retiro district, capture the conversion of home into a child-centered space (Zehier, 2001; Lancy, 2008). Apartments, in line with standards for similar income-range house-holds across Madrid, have limited space and make efficient use of the structures that are available in the home.

Many households in this study have between 2-3 bedrooms for families with 1-2 children. As a result, in some households siblings share rooms, the majority of households do not have 'spare rooms' (e.g. for a home office/computer room, play room, independent study, etc.) - or if they do have such a space it is 'gained' by having, for example, siblings share a room. These structural conditions, in the context of households where children are visible protagonists, have three interrelated consequences.

First, children's bedrooms (whether individual or shared by siblings) are richly equipped with toys, materials and furniture particularly designed for children. Given the age-range of the children in the Retiro study, the principal activity that is underscored for children in these spaces is play. For example, Figure 4 shows a part of a bedroom (occupied by a single-child) that holds numerous objects for the child and where the bed has been elevated to create supplementary play (and storage) space for the child.

Figure 4: Children`s bedrooms



Second, traditionally adult (and male) spaces in Spanish households such as the living room are now converted into multi-purpose spaces which may include a section fully colonized by children's objects and toys. In fact, there was a shared pattern in the homes of this study where a portion of the common living room was almost exclusively dedicated to children's

artifacts and activities. Figure 5 illustrates this pattern and shows how the whole wall under the living room window has been occupied by toys and child-objects and how children use the space in front of the living room sofa as play space - the photograph captures two sisters and a guest friend playing in the home living room:

Figure 5: Children in the living room



Third, children and adults share artifacts and devices in the homes. The income and age-range of the children in this first study probably does not encourage families to invest in 'duplicated' devices such as televisions, personal computers or musical equipment for the children (cf. Plowman et al; 2010). However, the children do make use of these devices and, consequently, the family television set is used to watch child-oriented programming or videos or the personal computer is often a shared piece of equipment that may be placed in the shared living room.

Children's engagement with technologies of communication complicates greatly our understanding of children's space-time behaviors and the role that home as a physical space plays in their routines. These complexities emerge more clearly as children grow older, thus the study of these patterns in pre-adolescence is an especially relevant question.

PRE-ADOLESCENTS' USES OF TECHNOLOGY IN HIGHLY-EQUIPPED HOMES

In comparison to the portraits presented above, the cases of the second study reflect a material reality that moves up in the socio-economic scale. While we described the homes in Retiro as reflecting 'average' middle-class standards for the city of Madrid (where home prices are high in comparison to other

Spanish cities and home-space is constrained), the homes of the Salamanca/Chamartín pre-adolescents reflect their socio-economic privileged situation. To begin, space limitations disappear and homes have larger communal areas (e.g. kitchens and living-rooms), each child has its own individual bedroom and both parents and children in the family have supplementary 'personal rooms', such as home offices, play-rooms, guest-rooms or even service rooms. This affluence is also reflected in the technologies that are made available to pre-adolescents in these environments, where many technological devices are duplicated and 'owned' by individual members of the household. For example, Arianna (12 years of age when she began participating in the study, for more details see González-Patiño, 2011) has four personal computers, three land-line phone units, three independent cell phones, three televisions, multiple digital audio and video devices, several personal computer gaming devices and access to digital/cable television services in her home. From our perspective this case illustrates well two processes that may be emerging in the context of 'advanced' uses of communication technologies in contemporary homes which are especially relevant to the issues of this paper: (a) how technology use is patterned and structured within the physical geography of the home; (b) how technologies play a role in establishing continuities between the

different vital contexts (i.e. 'islands') of these pre-adolescents.

In relation to the first question, Arianna's reported use of technological devices shows that she has available her own and her parents' equipment and that her uses are

patterned both in relation to activity and location. As Tables 1-3 show, Arianna uses particular devices for work, communication and entertainment and to do so deploys equipment that is 'owned' by different family members and is located in different parts of the house.

Space	<i>Bed-room</i>	<i>Living-room</i>	<i>Home-office</i>
Device	Desktop computer Laptop Wireless land-line phone	Mother's laptop Land-line phone Wireless land-line phone	
Use	Home-work	Home-work and after school activities	

Table 1: Arianna's use of technology for work

Space	<i>Bed-room</i>	<i>Living-room</i>	<i>Home-office</i>
Device	Laptop Wireless land-line phone Mobile	Mother's laptop Land-line phone Wireless land-line phone Mobile	Father's laptop Land-line phone Mobile
Use	Answer calls Talk to friends SMS Web-browsing	Answer calls Talk to friends SMS Web-browsing	SMS Social networks Messenger

Table 2: Arianna's use of technology for leisure communication

Space	<i>Bed-room</i>	<i>Living-room</i>	<i>Home-office</i>
Device	Laptop 15" TV Nintendo DS iPod	Mother's laptop Main TV LCD DVD / HD DTV Set Top Box Nintendo Wii Nintendo DS	Father's laptop 15" TV
Use	Broadcast TV (DTV) VOD TV (Internet) Web-browsing Computer games Music	Broadcast TV (DTV, Cable) VOD TV (Internet, Cable, HD DVD) Web-browsings Computer games	

Table 3: Arianna's uses of technology for entertainment

This distribution suggests a pattern where, as Arianna moves on to more leisure oriented uses of technology (i.e. communication and entertainment vs. home-work), she also makes higher use of shared equipment and locates her activities in communal areas of the house, such as the living room or the home office. One aspect that may play a role in this spatial distribution of technological use is parental monitoring. As Extract 2 suggests, Arianna is aware that she has relatively unrestricted access to communication devices in comparison to her same-age and gender peers, but probably this access implicitly rests on her use of shared computing devices in spaces where she can be supervised by her parents:

Extract 2: Arianna's access to web-based resources

(...)

I: You were saying that in your class children have Tuenti¹ and girls don't?

A: not all, not the majority, but there are cases, boys have Tuenti and girls don't

I: and why?

A: because, except for one of my friends, one or two, I think maybe one, all the others are very, very protected, they virtually can't do anything on their own and then, I don't know

I: so it's because their parents don't let them?

A: because their parents don't let them, yes that's why (...)

In other words, Arianna's use of technology at home clearly runs counter to (perhaps older) beliefs in relation to the role of technology as a force that isolates adolescents and pre-adolescents in their homes (cf. Jones, 2010) or even bedrooms (cf. Livingstone, 2007). Rather, her use of technologies involves different forms of mediation with the outside world and technological devices and some sustain interconnections between the different contexts of Arianna's social world. Our analysis suggests that Arianna is involved in three forms of mediation through technologies; with mediation being understood in socio-cultural terms as the constructed interrelationship between meaning, semiotic systems and social actors (Cazden, 2001; Rybacki, 2009).

A first structure of mediation can be described as convergence in which multiple devices are put to work in the same task and activity system. Figure 6 illustrates this strategy; it shows Arianna solving home-work assignment in the living-room in which she is: (a) using her mother's lap-top computer, (b) a piece of paper to calculate the size of an image they have to incorporate into the assignment, (c) talking on the telephone with a class-mate who is working on the same assignment, (d) has her cell-phone on the table, where she might receive calls or text messages related to the assignment.

Figure 6: Technologically mediated convergence



The second mediation structure follows the opposite logic and we have named it divergence. Here multiple devices are used simultaneously for different activities and purposes and attention is distributed along multiple screens (cf. Jones, 2010). The following extract captures Arianna's rationale for divergence:

Extract 3: Technologically mediated divergence

(...) Many afternoons I'm in my room and then I turn on the TV, but just watching it, many times I get bored, I'm there sitting, I have the TV on the table and then I get bored, I think "Oh now my friends will be connected!" and then I connect to talk to them but I have the TV but basically just listen to it more than watch it, I usually connect to the internet, especially messenger in the afternoon (...)

The final form of mediation is made possible through the most current features of available technology and the privileged access that Arianna has to them and influences the ways in which she consumes media products. We have described this as everywhere access (following the commercial description of this form or technology use) in which through streaming, video on demand or broadcast,

Arianna can consume media productions ('TV series', movies, etc.) through different technological devices, in different locations within the home and according to her own time-schedules. Consequently, for example, Arianna's main device to watch her favorite television series is a lap-top computer. This gives her flexibility and, also, lets her circumvent restrictions her parents impose on her media consumption.

In short, these uses of technology in the home illustrate how they play a role in sustaining social relations and activities that emerge in out-of-home contexts and connect pre-adolescents with a wider social world of media consumption. Arianna's use of technology is distributed across home spaces and is not strictly limited to her bedroom or to technological equipment for her private use – which, given her socio-economic status, she does possess. This portrait complicates greatly any notion of technology as a socially isolating force, whether in relation to public space or even inside homes (cf. Morduchowicz, 2010; Bovill and Livingstone, 2001).

CONCLUSIONS

In this article we have examined in detail children's activities in middle-class and upper-class homes in Madrid. We have attempted to do so from a systemic-ecological perspective

which would allow us to examine children's home life in the context of their total daily routines and the changing social conditions that configure their lives. The findings we present show an active and rich home life in a sample that is, demographically, relatively representative (albeit small) of children from three particular districts of the city of Madrid. Further, the participants we discuss reflect a particular scope of variation in socio-economic, cultural and geographic terms and, thus, the discussion of the findings should be read with these considerations in mind. In this context, our results problematize two claims that have been recently put forward in relation to children's life circumstances in contemporary Europe (and, more widely, Western contexts).

First, these children's extensive home life cannot be seen as an effect of a retreat from public space, either in practical-empirical or ideological terms (cf. Valentine, 2004). Our interviews with parents suggests that the neighborhoods they live in are perceived in rather positive terms and, in line with other municipal 'indicators', reflect a favorable assessment of the living conditions of the district. Further, these patterns of home use seem to be general to a wide range of participating families and are relatively independent of children's participation in other out-of-home contexts, whether regulated after-school programs or unstructured public spaces. In other words, both children who spend an important portion of their after-school time outside their homes as well as those who spend most of their evenings at home participate in the transformations of domestic space we have discussed above. Second, the interconnection between children's home life and their participation in other social spaces does not easily fit into an interpretation of these as isolated islands (Zehier, 2001; Gillis, 2008). On one hand, the neighborhood and district are still important structuring elements of their daily lives, where their home life, schooling, friendships and, even, extended family relations take place and, thus, the immediate community does not seem to disappear as a

relevant dimension of middle-to-upper class children's lives. On the other hand, participants (especially the pre-adolescents) have a variety of technological tools for communication, which have emerged and expanded very rapidly only in the last few years, used to sustain their social relationships and engagement with other contexts from their own homes.

Therefore, we suggest it would be better to consider spatial differentiation and specialization in children's lives -processes which do seem to be taking place- from the perspective of the alternative framework we presented in the introduction. The various spaces that configure children's lives should be seen as part of a complete ecological system rather than as isolated fragments. Also, new forms through which connections between spaces are established should be contemplated, such as those made possible through technologies of communication. Having said this, some considerations can be made in relation to the generalizability of our data. The sample of children we studied reflects the reality of children who live in the more privileged residential and socio-economic spectrum of life conditions in Madrid. Therefore, whether the patterns we have identified are reproduced in families and children who live under different material and socio-economic realities in Madrid remains an empirical question that can only be addressed with further research. Also, while the broader pattern of specialization and fragmentation of children's lives has been discussed in the European context, in practice, its empirical basis draws more on the reality of 'northern' European countries. Thus, it could be that our findings reflect a relevant cross-national difference within the European context in how children's social worlds and home lives are structured. Again, this is a question that only further research can clarify.

NOTES

1. Tuenti (<http://www.tuenti.com>) is a Spanish based social networking site, similar to Facebook. It is very popular among adolescents and young adults.

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